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The
Brightening
East or
Thoughts on
Christ's Coming

Rev. J. H. Townsend
D. D.





THE BRIGHTENING EAST

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REV. JOHN R. PALMER

THE BRIGHTENING EAST
OR
THOUGHTS ON CHRIST'S
COMING

BY THE
REV. J. H. TOWNSEND, D.D

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Preface



THE following chapters appeared during the present year in the periodical entitled *Living Waters*, and they have been published as a book at the request of many who wished to possess them in a compact and permanent form.

At the same time they are not exactly the same ; a few facts have been added, and as an illustration of the way in which Prophecy is being fulfilled before our eyes it may be mentioned that some sentences in the earlier chapters had to be re-written, owing to later and more striking developments even in the course of a few months.

That is what makes the precise moment so intensely interesting ; changes take place so rapidly now, compared with twenty-five

years ago, that one never knows what may not be on the morrow.

Just as in early spring the rosebud seems hardly to change in appearance for weeks together, but when the sunny month of June arrives two or three days show rapid progress, there is growth every hour before one's eyes, and suddenly one morning the lovely flower is seen in all its beauty!

So perhaps it will be with our Lord's Return; in the former centuries the prophecies were slowly taking shape, during the last fifty years there has been a hastening, and in their latter half a still more rapid movement, while during the last five or six years the developments and changes have been so startling as almost to take one's breath away!

What is to be the next step? Only One can tell. But this we do know—"The Lord Whom ye seek shall *suddenly* come"!

November, 1903:

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CHAPTER I

THE PRIME MINISTER AND HIS BIBLE



FOR many many years, and throughout different changes of government, Daniel was Prime Minister in the Court of Babylon.

One afternoon, in his old age, as he was reading the book of the prophet Jeremiah, and thinking over the strange vicissitudes of his life—a prince of the house of Judah, a captive, an exile, a page in a foreign palace, then suddenly raised to highest honours, a statesman who had been the counsellor of kings, and enabled in his high position sometimes to help his captive and suffering fellow-countrymen—some thought

like this flashed across his mind : “ Surely, the seventy years foretold by the prophet must be almost fulfilled ! ”

The effect was overpowering—the old man fell upon his knees and prayed with all his heart that it might even be so ; he, the holiest man of whom the Bible gives us record, of whom not a fault is chronicled, pours out his soul in that wonderful petition (Daniel chap. ix.), where, identifying himself with his nation, he acknowledges his share in the guilt and the punishment that followed.

For his city he pleads, that its desolations might cease ; for the temple, that it might be rebuilt ; for his people, that their return from Babylon might be soon carried out.

How long he prayed we know not, but it could not have been a great while, for it took a holy angel only so long as the offering up of this prayer of sixteen verses to flash his bright way from the courts of Heaven to Daniel’s side (verse 23).

Everything recorded here is wonderful.

THE PRIME MINISTER 11

Daniel was a *wonderful man*; his character and career we have just noticed; his life stretched all through the period of the Jewish captivity from beginning to end, and he saw the return. He stood above the nation as a kind of sentinel on God's watch-tower, to teach and help his people and point their hopes to the rising sun of promise. They came to him with their griefs, and he ever showed them the coming certainty of God's covenant promise in the Scripture.

It was a *wonderful prayer*, and a *wonderful answer* in reply brought by that glorious Messenger who was in the far-off years to stand by the Blessed Virgin's side and announce the Redeemer's Advent. Still more wonderful was the *hour* when the answer came—the very hour when nearly five centuries later the Blessed Saviour was to die upon the Cross! That hour was frequently marked in the Bible as a time of great significance. At that hour God had

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answered prayer in marvellous ways ; we might surely expect, therefore, from such a focussing of mighty things, that a pronouncement of great weight was at hand. And so it was. The revelation contained in verses 24-27 surpasses in importance of matter, precision of detail, and clearness of chronology, anything yet vouchsafed to men.

Let us examine it closely—and remember, if we are to understand this prophecy, we must not import into it the Church or Christianity. The angel's message referred to Daniel's prayer, which, as we have seen above (verse 2), was about the fall of the oppressive power of Babylon and the approaching end of the captivity and desolations of Jerusalem.

The message consists of two parts. First, a summary of the whole, from start to finish, which occupies verse 24 ; and, secondly, an unfolding of the terms of the entire period (verses 25-27).

Daniel learned from this that the Messianic

blessings for his city and people, which probably he had hoped would come at the close of the seventy years' captivity, were not to be fulfilled then, nor until the end of a very much longer period, viz., "seventy-weeks" of years. That the period was not seventy ordinary weeks, i.e., a year and a half, needs no proof—it is palpable. Moreover, the expression "weeks of years" was familiar to the Jewish mind; in Leviticus xxv. 8, the people were directed to "number seven Sabbaths (or weeks) of years" in the reckoning of the Jubilee, and it is there stated that "the space of *seven Sabbaths of years* shall be unto thee *forty-nine years*."

The Holy Spirit has graciously given to us in this passage one of the most important keys to the study of prophecy by clearly explaining to us the duration of the "year-day," a period which often occurs in the prophetical books of the Old and New Testament. This whole season "seventy weeks" would thus signify $7 \times 70 = 490$ years.

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The next three verses explain further that this term of years was to be marked into three periods of seven weeks, sixty-two weeks, and one week. It is further explicitly stated by the angel that sixty-nine "weeks" should elapse from the issuing of the decree mentioned in verse 25, "unto Messiah the Prince." Now $7 \times 69 = 483$; that, therefore, is the period which first of all we are to consider. The statement is absolute, there can be no getting away from it. Let us test it closely, and see if the grandest and clearest prophecy ever given by God to man be true or false!

Sir Isaac Newton, who was a great student of prophecy, has pointed out in a well-known passage that the year of the ancients consisted of 360 days. It is known as the luni-solar year. This was the measurement of time adopted by Chaldeans and Babylonians from the earliest ages.¹ It is this which is

¹ It may be interesting to mathematicians to be reminded that the value of the angles at the

used in Genesis for the duration of the Flood, and the same we find in Revelation for prophetic measurements of time.

Having found our measure, we now proceed to work.

The angel's declaration was that "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem (not the temple, but the city) unto Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks"; he further goes on to state that the rebuilding of street and moat shall be in "troublous times," a statement amply justified by the description given in the book of Nehemiah many years afterward.

The date of that "commandment" or decree is carefully given to us in Nehemiah, chapters 1 and 2, as issued "in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes"; it can also be proved (but the particulars

intersection of two right lines, viz., 360, arises from the time given by the ancients to the sun for its circuit round the circle, viz., 360 days.

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would be too long for this chapter) that the actual date was the first day of Nisan.

Here, then, is our starting point—the first day of Nisan in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes. History tells us that the twentieth year of Artaxerxes was B.C. 445. *Now observe this startling fact*—from the date just mentioned to the tenth of Nisan, A.D. 32, was *exactly to the very day* 483 years (sixty-nine weeks of luni-solar years)! This calculation, which is based on mathematical tables, was submitted to the late Sir George Airey, Astronomer Royal, and was pronounced by him to be absolutely incontrovertible.¹ But what has the tenth of Nisan to do with the prophecy? Ah what beautiful things lie under the surface in the Bible! That was the very day when the Lord Jesus rode into Jerusalem and offered Himself to His people as “Messiah

¹ For further particulars the reader is referred to Sir R. Anderson's book, *Daniel in the Critic's Den*.

the Prince." What extraordinary meaning, lost in the Authorized Version, but brought to light in the Revised, flashes out of His words on that occasion: "If thou hadst known *in this day* the things that belong unto thy peace"! It is remarkable that we have the historical date at both ends: in St. Luke iii. 1, the Baptism of our Lord is stated by that careful chronicler to have taken place in "the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar." That year, as any student can find out for himself, was A.D. 28. The chronology of the Gospels tells us further that it was in the spring of A.D. 32, on the tenth day of Nisan, that our Lord acted as we have said.

Therefore, in perfect accordance with the angel's message, the period foretold was accomplished to the year—the month—the week—the *very day*! At the close of "sixty-nine weeks" the Messiah *was* "cut off." The *time* was fulfilled, the circumstance of the *death* was fulfilled, the destruc-

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tion of the *city* (verse 26) was fulfilled. WHO THEN, WILL DARE to impugn the authority and inspiration of the book of Daniel ?

The completion of the “seventieth week” and its bearing upon our times must be left to the next chapter.

CHAPTER II

THE MISSING WEEK



THE Angel's prophecy was startlingly true, as we have seen, and the "sixty-nine weeks" of years were fulfilled to the very day (Daniel ix. 25).

But what about the seventieth week? Has it begun, is it half over, or is it still untouched?

Some tell us, from their interpretation of verse 27, that it is half over, and that after three and a half years (or half a "week") of our Lord's ministry, He caused the virtue of the Temple sacrifices to cease by His Offering upon the Cross. It is perfectly true that our Saviour's death did take all

meaning out of the Temple sacrifices, but it is also true, as a matter of fact, that He did *not* "cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease," but that these went on for forty years afterwards !

With the tremendous exactness of the previous verses we cannot accept an interpretation that tries to explain away a solid fact of forty years. Moreover, verse 27 clearly follows in time the events of verse 26, which include the destruction of Jerusalem. You cannot jump about in chronology, nor change at will symbolism and history.

There remains yet one "week" to be accounted for, and those who make the seventy weeks an unbroken period have yet to explain how it is that in the next seven years (or "week") after the death of the Messiah *nothing happened* to correspond with the events of verse 26. The fact is, there is a gap in the succession. That "week" has not arrived yet, and the Church

period in which we live is the parenthesis that occupies the space.

We noticed before that verse 24 was a summary of the whole from start to finish ; it does not conclude with the death of Christ, but covers all the centuries that have passed since and stretches on to the pardon of the iniquity of Israel, the reign of everlasting righteousness, and the re-establishment of the city and people in gracious relationship with God.

The remaining verses take the events step by step up to a certain point, when there is a pause, and resume the historical sequence afterwards.

This is no new view of the case, but it has been long forgotten ; it was understood 1,700 years ago by Hippolantus ; also by Julius Africanus, and later by Cyprian, bishop of Carthage.

We have in Scripture cases somewhat parallel to this ; note especially Isaiah lxi., verse 2 ; our Lord in the synagogue at

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Nazareth was reading the lesson for the day, and when about to expound the passage He *stopped at a comma*, and shutting the book, said : “ This day is this scripture fulfilled.”

There is a gap of nearly two thousand years between that comma and the end of the verse ! So it is here, the “ seventieth week ” is yet to come. At any moment the Church period may cease and the seventieth “ week ” begin.

The mistake in expounding verse 27 as applying to Christ has arisen from misunderstanding the personal pronoun “ he ” (verse 27). This does not refer to the Messiah, but to the last person named—the prince of the people who destroyed Jerusalem. Draw a line with your pencil between the word “ prince ” (verse 26) and “ he ” in the verse following, and you will see how manifest is the connexion. Some persons will be startled by this, and will say : “ Oh, I always understood this of the Messiah ” ; of such we may well inquire :

“When did He make a firm covenant with any persons *for seven years* ? ” and further : “When did He break off such a covenant in three years and a half ? ” It seems needless to follow that idea further.

Who, then, is “the prince” ? He must be connected with the people that destroyed the city and sanctuary. It was the Romans, under Titus, who did this. Mark in passing the absolute accuracy of the inspired prophecy ; it is “the people,” not “the prince,” who “destroy,” and so Josephus, who lived at the time, tells us in his history—Titus gave strict orders to his soldiers to spare the Temple ; these orders were disobeyed, and when the news came that it was on fire he rushed to the spot and used every endeavour to have the flames put out, but in vain. “The people of the prince” destroyed the city and the sanctuary.

To return, however, to the prophecy.

It seems clear, therefore, that the coming

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Prince referred to in verse 27 must be *in some way connected with the nation* who long ago destroyed the city and the Temple.

The question therefore at once arises : Are there any nations now existing who claim connexion with or descent from that old Roman Empire ? Yes, every one knows that there are three : (1) France, upon whose standards are to be seen the Roman Eagles ; (2) Germany, whose Sovereign is named "Kaiser" ; (3) Russia, whose Emperor is termed "Czar" ; each of these titles being derived from "Caesar." Perhaps from one of these three Roman kingdoms may arise the prince, who will make a treaty ("a firm covenant," *Revised Version*) for seven years with the Jews in their own land after they have returned and have rebuilt their Temple, and at the end of three and a half years ("in the midst of the week") will break it off and cause the Temple services to cease. Then, probably, will commence "The Great Tribulation," long foretold.

Now to sum up the teaching for the present day in this wonderful message delivered by the Angel. It is twofold—for Jews and for Gentiles. God has not forgotten the Jews; there is a grand future awaiting them. At any moment the long-delayed “week” may commence, and they as a nation be established again, and for ever, in covenant relationship with God. We Gentile Christians know, thank God, the meaning, so far as we individually are concerned, of the “reconciliation made for iniquity”; it is our hope and trust and the source of our peace with God. The Jews know it not yet as a nation; but St. Paul’s words in Romans xi. teach us that they shall yet understand, welcome, and proclaim it. What, then, are we Christians expecting? The *first* phase of Christ’s Return.

We noticed in the former chapter that there is nothing in the Angel’s message about the Church. That is a matter relating to the parenthesis still going on between the end

of the sixty-nine " weeks " and the beginning of the seventieth. Gabriel's words were an especial answer to Daniel's prayer, and convey a revelation that refers to the *second* phase of Christ's Return (with which the Jews as a nation are especially concerned), to the Millennial Reign, and to the bringing in of Everlasting Righteousness.

If numerous political events, some of which I hope to point out in another chapter, indicate the near approach of the Second Phase of the Advent, how close must be the first period—the time of His Coming for His Church !

We too, like Daniel, may "know by books," for we possess (but very few study) " the more sure word of prophecy." We too may have a heavenly visitant ; not an angel, but the Holy Spirit Himself, Who has promised that " the wise " (that is those who humbly and prayerfully seek for heavenly wisdom) " shall understand."

CHAPTER III

THE DRYING UP OF THE RIVER



WHEN we think of our Lord's Second Advent we ought first to ask ourselves this question : " What am I expecting ? "

Ever since our Saviour's Ascension His Church has been with more or less faithfulness watching for His Return, but after Apostolic days some great misconceptions began to arise with regard to the attendant circumstances.

These prevailed almost universally until the last century. For example, the idea was very general that there would be a certain Day, when the Lord at a given moment would appear in glory in the

heavens before mankind with all His mighty angels, and then and there would hold the awful Judgment. It used to be believed that immediately after this event the earth and all that was therein would be burnt up. These ideas have been considerably modified during the last sixty or seventy years by the teaching, as I firmly believe, of the Holy Spirit. When Christ ascended He promised that the Comforter would come to guide and teach His Church, and lead them into "the whole truth," and we observe in history that as great events approached He taught His people more about them. A prophetic student in America with whom I have been in communication for several years has told me that all the leading writers upon this subject in Great Britain, the Colonies, and the continent of Europe have, in response to personal inquiry, agreed in this remarkable point, viz., that in the last twenty-five years of the late century, i.e., from about the year 1874 or 1875, a clearer understanding has

been given to them than they ever possessed before on these subjects. This is, I think, a significant and encouraging statement. With regard to our Lord's Advent, there are two or three points upon which prophetic students are now agreed. One is that "the day of His Coming" will not be a day of twenty-four hours, but a season perhaps as long as "the Day of Salvation" has been, and a season too with different phases and periods. Another that the Judgment will not be a matter of twenty-four hours, but that there will be different periods of Judgment, at different intervals.

First, the *Judgment of Reward* for Christ's servants at His Coming (see St. Luke xiv. 14; 1st Cor. iii. 13, iv. 5, etc.). Second, the *Judgment of the Nations*, when Christ will examine the way in which the world has treated His "brethren" (the Jews), and the message concerning "the Gospel of the Kingdom," which it will be the business of the Jews to proclaim to the world after the

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Church has been taken up by Christ (see St. Matt. xxv. 31, etc.). Third, at the close of the Dispensation, the *Judgment of the Great White Throne* (see Revelation xx.).

Again, that St. Peter's words about the burning of the world probably refer to some purifying process at a later period, by means of which the world shall be cleansed from all evil.

In the day, or season, of Christ's Coming there will be evidently two phases: (1) His Coming for His Church (1 Thess. iv.), an appearing apparently independent of historical or prophetic events; (2) His Coming with His Church, to establish His Reign upon earth (St. Matt. xxv. 31, 2 Thess. ii. 2-8, etc.), an appearing that seems to be dependent upon certain important events and the fulfilment of certain prophecies.

About two years ago an incident occurred in England which may serve as an illustration of my meaning. When the present Prince

of Wales returned from his tour around the world, by which he had been welding together his father's vast kingdom, there was arranged for him upon his arrival a grand national reception, so that the whole people might witness his return. But before that triumphal home-coming and great national welcome *there was a family gathering*. There the family as a family exchanged joyful greetings before the great function took place.

The Lord Jesus went away on matters connected with the Kingdom, and on His Return He is to be received publicly: "every eye shall see Him." But first of all there is to be a family gathering; those who during the time of Christ's rejection by the world have accepted Him as their Lord shall receive special distinction at His Return. To them first He will reveal Himself when they are "caught up to meet the Lord in the air." This is entirely a family matter; the world at large, even professing Christendom, has nothing to do with it. Then, after an

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interval—the length of which we are not told, though we may form probable opinions upon its duration—the Lord shall appear in the clouds in glory, and all His holy angels with Him. Now we are prepared to answer the question with which this chapter began, “What am I expecting?”

It is the appearance of our Lord for His Church. This, we believe, may be at any moment, and is entirely independent of the fulfilment of any prophecies.

It is therefore a matter of extraordinary interest to note that various prophecies which refer to the *second phase* of the Advent are taking shape before our eyes. Some have been fulfilled in the past generation, some in our own day, some are being fulfilled to-day.¹ The events chronicled in our daily papers often testify to the truths of the prophecies.

¹ For fuller particulars than can be instanced here the reader is referred to the writer's works on this subject, *A Bright To-morrow*, *Watching for the Dawn*, and *Thoughts for Watchers*, published by Marshall Brothers, Keswick House.

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Let me give one remarkable instance. Twice in the book of Revelation the River Euphrates is named (ch. ix. 14 and xvi. 12). It is clear that a stream of water is not meant in either place. The expression is symbolical, and is one that is used in the prophets for an invasion, e.g., Assyria is spoken of under the figure of an "overflowing river."

These two passages in Revelation clearly describe a mighty invasion, and in the second passage it is said that the waters of this overflowing river shall be "dried up" shortly before the coming of the Lord in Judgment. How important, therefore, to find out what invading power is described here !

The great Bishop Newton, in his famous work on prophecy, published in 1773, in a remarkable passage (vol. iii. pp. 113-126) proves beyond dispute that Turkey is the power here described. A hundred years later, Sir Edward Creasy began his history of the Turkish Empire with these words :

"Six centuries ago a band of horsemen proceeded westwards from the upper streams of the Euphrates." That place was the cradle of the Ottoman or Turkish Empire. We look back to Revelation, ch. ix., and read a startling description of the huge invading force which from a small beginning swelled into a great overflowing river of invasion whose waters burst from Asia into Africa, devastating all the Christian Churches in North Africa, penetrating into Spain, sweeping across Asia Minor into Europe, and even swelling in a mighty flood around the walls of Vienna.

There its progress was arrested, and since then by steady degrees the waters have gone back, most rapidly in the last century beginning with the independence of Greece in 1830. Event has succeeded event since then, and Servia, Bulgaria, Roumania, Herzegovina, and other smaller states have gradually emerged from the retiring flood, while it appears from recent events as if Macedonia

DRYING UP OF THE RIVER 35

would soon follow their example. In the last century some epochs regarding Turkey's power were watched with interest by prophetic students. The first came, as expected, in 1844, when that famous English statesman, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe (who was laid to rest in the churchyard of the parish adjoining my own), wrung from the Turkish Sultan the decree of freedom of conscience within his dominions. Hitherto a Moslem changing his religion had been always put to death. England demanded that this should cease, and thus a mighty and a humbling change took place in the constitution of the Turkish Empire. The next epoch was looked for in the spring of 1882. The present writer invited his people to watch, and in the very week when it was expected it came ! British ironclads knocked down the forts at Alexandria, England took the protectorate of Egypt, and Turkey lost for ever one of its greatest possessions. Another epoch is expected early in the present century, and this

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will be perhaps the last event in the "drying up" of this once overflowing river.

Possibly then the Turkish Government will retire from Europe and move eastward. Little more than a year ago a significant message was sent to the Sultan of Turkey by the Mohammedans of Arabia advising him to withdraw from Europe altogether. This may be just the way in which the "drying up" will be effected. This drying up of the waters of the Euphrates, or decadence of the Turkish Empire, is one of the great historic and prophetic events that Scripture leads us to believe will shortly precede the *second phase* or period in our Lord's Advent. If we see this "drying up" rapidly taking place before our eyes, as undoubtedly we do, how very near may be that *first period of the Advent*, when the Lord shall come for His Church!

CHAPTER IV

THE WORLD-WANDERER



THE Jew is a mysterious figure that appears through all the history of the world for many and many a century and age that is past. He is linked with the far-off record of man's story and intimately bound up with the counsel of God as regards man's future.

He moves before us with an enigma hanging over him waiting to be solved. I suppose this is not to be wondered at, for when we remember that the mystery of mysteries—the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ—came through a Jew, it is no marvel that the nation itself should be wrapped up in

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mystery. The Jew moves about, led by an unseen power, and in a sense bearing the destinies of all nations in himself. In addition to all this, we plainly see in the pages of history that he has an extraordinary influence for good or evil upon the nations of the world around him.

Look back into the past history of this wonderful race. In the book of Genesis, from the 12th to the 15th chapter, you see bubbling forth the little spring of that mighty river which shall never cease to flow. There you find the three great promises made by God to Abraham: The Posterity, the Possessions, the Saviour.

Then passing to Deuteronomy, Moses (I still believe, and so, I am sure, do you—as did our Lord and His Apostles—that Moses wrote the Pentateuch), on the heights of prophecy, looking down the great vista of time, saw and recorded what should happen to Israel in future days of disobedience. You can find for yourself prophecies in the

book of Deuteronomy which accurately describe the sufferings of the people at the siege of Jerusalem, as well as the present state of the Jews among the nations of the world. All through the prophetic books are to be found many similar predictions. The only one to which I shall refer now is that tiny "cameo of history" contained in Amos ix. 9: "I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth." What a vivid, truthful picture of the state of things for the last 1,800 years!

In the New Testament our Lord takes up the thread of prophecy, and after He had been rejected by His nation He drew a sorrowful picture of the coming horrors that should begin with the capture of the city by the Romans, and should extend all over the mysterious period—"The Times of the Gentiles." Now observe, all through these ages this scattered nation has been *kept in a marvellous way*. Its contempor-

aries have disappeared; the ancient nations of Babylon, Assyria, Greece, Rome, and Egypt have played their part and are gone, but the Jewish people abides. One other nation that was its contemporary remains, viz., the kingdom of Persia; and who can doubt that it is because of Persia's kindness to the Jews that she has been preserved? It was kings of Persia who restored the captive people to their land, and all the priceless gold and silver vessels for their worship, who sent forth decrees to rebuild their Temple, and, later on, the walls of Jerusalem.

I believe it is because of these acts of kindness to God's ancient people that Persia has been preserved.

With this exception, all the other nations have passed, but Israel is kept, and for what? The answer is clear: For God's purposes in the future. There is a remarkable chapter in the prophecy of Ezekiel (chap. xxxiv.) that is often misunderstood. We

imagine that it refers to spiritual teaching and spiritual care ; it may have an *application* in that way, but I do not think that to be the *interpretation*, and we should always distinguish between these things when we read the Bible.

Ezekiel xxxiv. should be read with St. Matthew xxv. 31, etc. ; the former speaks about God's denunciations against the cruel, hard, and selfish "shepherds," and the judgments which they should receive.

Who are the shepherds ? I think they are the various Gentile kings and rulers, who ever since the days of Nebuchadnezzar have had something to do with the government of the Jews. To this day the Eastern expression for a subject is a "shepherded one."

In Ezekiel xxxiv. God is described as looking upon the various nations that had Jews for their subjects, and as announcing His intention of judging them for the way in which they treated His flock. In St.

Matthew xxv. our Lord tells us that He will summon the living nations before Him, and will ask how they have treated His brethren ? He declares, moreover, that kindnesses shown to them He reckons as done to Him. We may look further into Ezekiel xxxiv., and see in that passage from the 17th to the 22nd verse a remarkable warning to the fat and strong of the flock who have trodden down and thrust aside the "weak ones." That seems to be a significant description of the way in which the various subjects of these Gentile kings have ill-treated and defrauded the Jews.

God allowed His ancient people to be scattered among the nations for His own purposes. Some of these we are permitted to know ; e.g., in Romans xi. 31, you will see one reason for their dispersion amongst Christian nations—"that *by the mercy shown to you* they also may obtain mercy" (Revised Version).

How terribly has that Divine purpose been

frustrated in the past ! How cruelly has every Christian nation treated the Jew ! The record is dreadful, and our treatment of them in the centuries long ago was shocking, but, thank God, our nation was the very first to show kindness to the Jew ! God grant that when the nations are judged before Him, England may not be placed on the left hand ! I believe she will not.

It was in 1753 that England first gave the privilege of enfranchisement to the Jews in her territories. A hundred years passed by, and in 1858 she gave the Jews equal rights all round with British citizens, and allowed them to sit in Parliament. All the other European nations have followed England's example a long distance behind—all *with one tremendous exception !*

As you look back over the past you see that the history of the Jewish people has been very sorrowful, very shameful, and yet very significant. In the present aspect of the Jewish problem three things stand out

clearly. One is terrible, the two others are joyful, but all three are suggestive and full of promise. Take the sad one first. God, by the mouth of His holy prophet Moses, described His action towards His people under the figure of an eagle "stirring up her nest." As it was in the past in their history in Egypt, so we recognize that it shall be in their future. By that figure we understand that when the Jews should be settled under various nations and should become prosperous, as the time drew near for the fulfilling of His promise to bring them back to their own land He would let troubles come upon them, so that they should not make their nest permanently in different parts of the world, but should be compelled to fly homewards. During the last few years there has arisen that new persecution against the Jews in Europe called the anti-Semitic movement. Every nation except England has been the scene of harass and malignity towards this people.

What makes this more remarkable is the present social condition of the Jew. He is not a tramp or a gipsy. He is not a poor insignificant creature haunting the purlieus of our great cities. On the contrary, the Jew is to be found in the highest position in every profession of every nation. Some of the greatest statesmen, lawyers, physicians, astronomers, writers, musicians, have been and are Jews. The leading bankers in the whole world belong to that race. The Rothschild family have lent the nations of Europe in 10 years £112,000,000. In the Broadway, New York, it is stated that out of some 1,200 wholesale merchants more than 1,000 are Jews. In an article written a few years ago by Sir Arnold White he enters into the question about the position which this people occupies in Europe. He says: "The Jew has become our master," and in confirmation of this statement follow many remarkable details.

It appears that in Austria alone, out of

320 registered journalists, 270 are Jews ; that in Berlin, out of 25 Liberal papers, 23 are in the hands of Jews. These are a few samples of facts brought forward by this writer in illustration of his statement.

The Jews have the brains of Europe : the leading journals on the Continent are controlled by them, and in England they have a great influence over the Press. This is a very remarkable position ; and it is most significant that when they are in such prosperity and exercising such striking power an agitation like this anti-Semitic movement should have started. Why has it arisen ? The Jew is not aiming at political power, he is peaceful and prosperous, and he helps to make the land in which he lives peaceful and prosperous too. The following incident may supply an answer to our question—

About twenty years ago I read the public utterances of some well-known Jews abroad, which largely represented the current feeling

amongst their compatriots. They said :
“ We do not want to return to Jerusalem.
Berlin is the Jerusalem of some of us, Paris
of others ; let us forget the land of our
fathers.” But God did not forget what He
had said, for I believe He allowed this perse-
cution to arise to stir them up in their nest
and to make them long for their real home.
I must reserve for the next chapter some
account of the *awful fiery persecution* through
which many thousands of Jews are passing
at this moment.

CHAPTER V

THE BURNING BUSH



IN the forefront of the persecutors of God's ancient people there stands one great and terrible figure: it is Russia; the savage, relentless enemy of the Jews. I am not alluding to the Czar; he is a Christian, tender, benign, and gracious; but the Czar is not Russia. I suppose that, autocrat though he be, the monarch of that country has less power than any constitutional ruler in Europe. The real rulers of Russia hate the Jew with a malignant hatred, and they show it by every means in their power. In 1882 a tremendous persecution burst forth in that country against the Jews. Strangely enough, this had been foretold three hundred years

before, in the writings of a learned Jew, and it came to pass exactly true to date. This persecution, in which the Russian statesman Ignatieff took a prominent part, went on for some years before the Governments of Europe began to make representations to the Cabinet of St. Petersburg. Russia assured these countries that it was a most malignant rumour, and wholly without foundation. The Governments of Europe had accordingly to be satisfied with this diplomatic answer. But children have a way of saying things bluntly; they are not diplomatists, and the same characteristic is to be seen in a child-nation. The great child-nation of America has not graduated in the arts of diplomacy.

Accordingly in 1892, after Russia had been for some time sending large numbers of Jewish immigrants in pauperism to the United States, the Government of that country inquired why the Jews were arriving in such numbers and in such a condition.

Russia blandly replied that they were not being driven forth, but were being treated with the greatest possible kindness.

Our American cousins, with their usual sharpness, were not taken in by this reply, and accordingly Congress issued a Commission and sent its members to various parts of Europe, requiring them to find out the real state of things, and to inquire into the condition of the Jews in other lands as well as in the Czar's dominions. Two of the Commissioners—one a member of Congress, the other a physician—went to Russia armed with the necessary credentials of their Government. Permission to visit various places were given to them, *but difficulties were thrown in their way with the greatest persistency.*

The Commissioners, however, would not be denied, but visited every corner of Russia where Jews were to be found, especially the great Settlements. They then wrote their report, which was issued as a Govern-

ment document in the same year, 1892. This official book authoritatively gave to the world the state of things in Russia, and it is *too horrible for words*.

The President wrote in very strong language to the late Czar, but he could do no more. America had eased her conscience with some very solemn and severe language towards Russia.

This official report, which I have carefully read, gave the most awful account of the state of things in Russia as regards the Jews.

Villages were burned down, and the inhabitants forced to live in tents during the severest winter weather in a state of semi-starvation.

In some places they were crowded into towns and obliged to herd together like cattle, with the apparent intent, and necessary consequence, of fevers and various diseases raging amongst them and sweeping them away. In other places they were

driven from their homes at the point of the bayonet, and flogged along the roads to the nearest seaport, with orders to leave the country at once.

They were not allowed to practise their trades ; they were treated with every kind of inhumanity, often fettered and imprisoned. The Commissioners distinctly stated that in many places young Jewish women were forced either to abjure their religion and join the Russian Church, or be driven on to the streets to live a life of compulsory immorality.

My readers may be inclined to say : “ Surely things have improved during the last ten years ? ” I grieve to say that the contrary is the fact. Accounts have reached me from various sources during that period which show that this awful state of things has not ceased. Some may naturally say : “ Why do they not all leave Russia ? ” The answer is simple. “ Because they now are *not allowed to go.* ”

Russia's policy at present is to try and stamp the Jews out of existence by suffering and disease, or to absorb them into their own population by proscribing the use of the Hebrew language, drafting the boys into the army, and treating the young women in the manner described above. This is all going on comparatively quietly, and Russia has means of preventing the intelligence travelling through the usual channels. Sometimes, however, she fails in this respect.

In the month of April in the present year the civilized world was startled and horrified by the news of the massacre of Jews in Kischenew, a town of some 100,000 inhabitants, situated in South Russia, to the north-west of Odessa. It appears that a local newspaper had published a series of inflammatory articles against the Jews, describing them as the enemies of the Government and country. The result was a fearful attack upon them by the populace,

in which numbers of Jews were murdered with atrocious cruelty, and women and children treated with horrible indignity before being put to death.

Mr. Samuel Wilkinson, who is connected with the Mildmay Mission to the Jews, went off at once to investigate matters, and the account which he gives, pp. 87-92 in the June number of the magazine entitled *Trusting and Toiling* (Marshall Bros.), is too awful to contemplate. He gives in full the copy of a letter sent to Odessa during the riots by one of the Jewish survivors. The particulars here described by eye-witnesses are fiendishly terrible. Yet, with the riot raging all around, *the police did not interfere, and only on the third day did the Governor ride out to inspect the picture!*

Then after hundreds of Jews had been killed or severely wounded some arrests were made, but of these murderers over half were set free, and the rest given only the form of a few weeks' imprisonment.

A well-known public lady singer in Odessa offered to give a concert in aid of the Jewish sufferers, but the Governor of Odessa refused his permission ; it was intimated, however, that a concert could be given *in aid of the wives and families of the imprisoned plunderers and murderers !*

When the feeling of indignation against Russia found words in Christendom the Governor of Kischenew was dismissed—that was to be expected, just as in China, when foreign Governments have to be appeased some officials' heads are cut off—and a great show of righteous horror was paraded in some Russian papers ; but in the London journals of July 20 last there appears an official document, issued by the head of the police in the very district where the massacres occurred, instructing his subordinates to proceed in the severest manner against the unfortunate survivors.

More significant still is a paragraph in *The Times* of July 23, in which the state-

ment of a high Russian official (whose name is given) is quoted. This gentleman is reported to have said that he would recommend "the most extreme measures" towards the Jews, and would "render their lives in Russia impossible." *He*, forsooth! as if this was not all permitted by a Higher Power and for a higher purpose. We are reminded of the Apostles' words (Acts iv. 27, 28) respecting the plots of the Jews against the Lord Jesus—"for to do whatsoever Thy Hand and Thy Counsel determined before to be done."

Poor wretched Jews! "The iron furnace" of heathen Egypt was nothing compared to the persecutions of "Christian" Russia. How long this state of things is to last God only can tell. Perhaps He allows it to stir up the peoples of Europe and America to enter some powerful protest which shall force Russia, as Egypt was compelled of old, to let the trodden-down nation go forth to their Promised Land!

CHAPTER VI

THE VISION AND ITS FULFILMENT



OCASIONALLY, when an artist wishes to bring some bright subject into the background of his picture, he makes the foreground dark and gloomy. I remember a picture in the Royal Academy which fascinated me. An impending storm cast its deep shadow over the foreground, but in the middle distance the light was beginning to fall upon the scene, while farther on towards the horizon as far as eye could see were long stretching vistas of light and glory.

This picture illustrates the subject which we are now considering. The last two chapters have described a very terrible

state of things in the present condition of the Russian Jews ; that is the dark foreground ; but in beautiful contrast to this is something bright and wonderful, which makes one happy to think of and write about ; this forms a vivid background to the picture. I call it the "background" because, although it is commencing now, it will go on into the immeasurable distances of the future, and though the picture will be chequered with light and shade, the light shall conquer in the end, and "that which is last lasts for ever." I allude to the Zionist movement, a national undertaking of the greatest possible interest, and towards which the eyes of the world are turned with close observation.

About eleven years ago, impelled by these terrible persecutions in Russia, some earnest Jews started this idea, which has for its single object *the establishment of Israel and Judah as a nation once more in their own land.*

Nothing perhaps in recent history is more extraordinary than the way in which this national movement sprang into life.

Beginning in a modest way, it has spread like wildfire all over the world. The public at large do not see the workings of this organization, but the Jews know all about it; part of the project is to establish a branch called "The Jewish Colonization Branch," which is for the furtherance of this one object and nothing else.

At certain seasons of the year, in all parts of the world where Jews are to be found, not only in Europe, but in North and South America, in South Africa and India, and in lonely parts of Australia, there arrive mysterious men bearing certain credentials, who receive the fixed and graduated contributions of the Jews and carry them back for the central fund. Some of the richer Jews are not taking much part in this scheme because they are so comfortable and wealthy, but the poorer Jews help it

on enthusiastically, and the two millions wanted for the capital has been found long since, one branch of the bank, it is stated, being in London, the other in Vienna.

The Zionist Congress has met annually for the past six years ; it is composed of delegates sent from Jewish communities from all parts of the world. It has met once in London ; this year it assembled in Basle. Part of the proceedings of the Congress are private, but the public are admitted to many of the meetings, and often the feelings of the delegates rise to a fever-pitch of enthusiasm. I have described at length elsewhere¹ some of the wonderful scenes that characterized the earlier Congresses, and especially that occasion when, at their second Congress held at Basle in 1898, they were recognized as a national assembly—"the first time," as a speaker enthusiastically remarked at a subsequent meeting, "that we have been

¹ *Watching for the Dawn*, pp. 43-52, and *Thoughts for Watchers*, p. 43.

recognized as a nation for two thousand years."

When the Congress disperses, a permanent committee remains to carry on the business of the nation until the next annual meeting.

A very important part of the work is political and diplomatic ; the Sultan has to be dealt with, and influential persons in Europe have to be interviewed from time to time. The Zionist Committee, under their chairman and great leader, Dr. Herzl, are perpetually carrying on negotiations with the Sultan for the establishment of self-government among the Jews of Palestine and for the purchase of tracts of land for Jewish colonization : this latter object is in view of the establishment of factories and engineering works of various kinds as well as of colonies for agricultural purposes. When the Sultan asked who was going to be sponsor for the money, he was told by Dr. Herzl that the Emperor of Germany had consented to be the Jews' security and guarantee the payment of the sum !

But the Zionists have no intention to pose as paupers ; nothing of the kind. The schemes which they have in hand are entirely business concerns, and who know better than they how to make things pay ? They are engaging the very best skilled workmen for the engineering works which they contemplate. Every fresh undertaking is animated with a display of national enthusiasm which is very interesting to behold. An instance of this occurred about a year ago at the inception of a great engineering work which may be of vast importance to Palestine in the future. I allude to the intention of making a fine harbour at Jaffa. Palestine is at present without a seaport, and in these days of commerce every industrial community is handicapped unless it possesses harbours for incoming and outgoing ships. The shrewd leaders of Zionism saw this clearly ; hence their determination to start this great undertaking.

A thousand workmen were engaged for the

work, and to show the national importance of the scheme a great procession was arranged for at Jerusalem to celebrate the occasion, and a tree was publicly planted to mark the beginning of what is hoped for as a new era of prosperity and self-government for Palestine.¹

These circumstances to which I have alluded are instances of a wonderful national movement going on before our eyes at this moment. To all who love their Bibles this

¹ While these pages were in the press there came to this parish a foreign engineer whose interest in the Jews had prompted him to think out a great work in their behalf. "No nation," he argued, "can now be great unless they have ports and a waterway." His plan, in brief, is to cut a large canal from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea, filling up not only that barren lake but some of the lower reaches of the Jordan, and thus making a small inland sea for the commercial benefit of Palestine. I am not at liberty to state anything further, nor to mention what steps have already been taken, but I submit to the thoughtful reader whether we may not see here in germ an explanation of that difficult passage in Ezekiel xlvii., especially verses 8-10; a passage which although full of deep spiritual meaning has always seemed to me to require some literal basis.

Zionist movement is of the deepest interest. Nearly two thousand five hundred years ago the Prophet Ezekiel saw the Vision of the valley of dry bones, recorded in the thirty-seventh chapter of his prophecy, and we in this day are seeing it fulfilled at last in the sight of the whole world. Verses 7 and 8 describe *what has actually taken place* in the last seven years. Scattered throughout the world the dry bones of the Jewish nation have lain for more than eighteen centuries ; we now see them *moving, gathering together, and taking shape as a nation*. They are yet without spiritual life : that is to come after they return to their own land, not before.

About fifteen years ago I was present at a clerical meeting, when a paper was read by a clergyman to refute the absurd idea current in some circles of a return of the Jews to Palestine !

He “ proved ” the utter futility of such a scheme on national and economic grounds ; ridiculed the idea as a wild, Utopian dream ;

“demonstrating” from Scripture that it was a spiritual not an actual return that was there prophesied. Ah, this spiritualizing of actual prophecies has been the bane of many interpreters! The Jews put a spiritual interpretation on the first eighteen verses of Psalm xxii.; we now see that they contain seven actual incidents that occurred at the Cross on Calvary. I ventured to oppose the speaker in every single particular of his paper, and hazarded the belief that we might see the actual event itself. That clergyman has lived to see the Zionist movement, which no one now doubts is the beginning of the actual return, and to read in the daily papers articles which treat of it as a thing that may occur any day!

I cannot but think that there is something curious about the days on which these Zionist Congresses have met. The first was held on the day in which it is believed that Jerusalem fell into the hands of the Romans. They unwittingly chose that day for their

first assembly as a reviving nation. Two years ago I observed that they selected as their first day of meeting the very day on which the Gentiles commemorate joyfully the birth of the Jewish Messiah ! This year they assembled on the first day of the week according to their reckoning, the day when their Messiah rose from the darkness of the grave, a happy omen we believe, of the time rapidly coming when their nation shall emerge from spiritual darkness and be endowed with a new life.

The present time is full of glorious promise for this wonderful people. A fortnight ago we saw the swallows gathering together in preparation for their flight, and that is just what the Jews are doing.

I said at the beginning of this chapter that I was going to write on a happy subject ; is it not true ? How happy to think of the poor persecuted Jews with this bright national hope rising above the horizon of their lives ! and, oh, how thrice happy are our eyes to

see the dawn of these glorious promises ! We believe that not long after the return to Palestine of God's ancient people the Lord will come to reign over them. But before that, and perhaps some time before, the Lord will come for His Church ; how soon, how very soon then may that glorious moment arrive !

CHAPTER VII

NEARING THE CRISIS



I HAD intended to pass from the subject treated in the previous pages to another aspect of the Jewish question, and had even written another chapter, but the fascination of the Zionist Congress is overpowering, and the issues raised are too startling to be passed by unnoticed. I will, therefore, without further apology, take my readers back in thought with me to the historic city of Basle and enable them to witness some of the scenes which will have made the Sixth Zionist Congress for ever memorable.

* * *

For days the city had been filling with

delegates from all quarters—England, America, South Africa, as well as all the various parts of the European continent; Russia (from Siberia to the Caucasus), Germany, Holland, and Belgium were well represented, Scandinavia sent its members, so did Persia, and many another country beside. Here was a group of Circassian Jews in their picturesque costumes, there three young Bulgarian Zionists who had walked every foot of the way *for sixty-two days* from Sofia, in Bulgaria, to Basle.

Basle has grown too small for the Congress; the 592 delegates crowded the hall to suffocation, and the committee-rooms were too few in number. The members were largely drawn from the mercantile and professional classes; lawyers, journalists, and writers were strongly represented, as well as the modern orthodox rabbis, who came not only from Russia, but from Austria and Italy.

Preliminary meetings occupied the pre-

vious days, but all business was suspended at 6 p.m. on Friday, August 21, when the Jewish Sabbath began, "and that Sabbath day was a high day," for did it not go before the opening of a Congress fraught with vast consequences for the Jews of the whole world? Services and lectures occupied the Sabbath day, and when it was over at six o'clock meetings recommenced, excitement increased, a great stream of people filled the Stadt Casino, and even *a hundred roubles*¹ was offered for a seat in the gallery. Many visitors, of course, were present, among the latter the famous Captain Dreyfus, the quondam victim of anti-Semitism in France. On Sunday morning, August 23, the Congress opened at 10.5. At 8 a.m. the delegates started to take their places and the gallery began to fill. The crowd, both of delegates and visitors, exceeded the accommodation of the hall. The building was one mass of faces, the blue and white badges with gilt

¹ About £15.

pins being prominent, and the banner of the Glasgow Zionists covering the tribune. While the people assemble let us look round the platform and see some of those who are to take part in the proceedings, or who are given places of honour among the speakers. There are well-known faces from England, America, and Canada, besides able representatives of the cause from every region of Christendom. There are Sir Francis Montefiore and I. Zangwill, so well known in London ; Dr. Marmorek, the popular delegate from Paris ; Cyrus Sulzberger, from New York, and crowds of others. That white-haired, white-bearded man is Dr. Max Nordau, one of the vice-presidents, immensely popular at the Congress ; that one with the smiling face is Colonel Goldsmid, not a delegate, but a man of such force of character that many go to him for counsel. Next to him is a lady, Madame Herzl, the mother of him who is the Agamemnon, Nestor, and Ulysses of the movement all in one. But see, the

whole assembly springs to its feet in an outburst of enthusiasm, shouts are raised, banners waved, as a noble-looking man, whose black beard is beginning to be tinged with grey, comes upon the platform. It is the president, Dr. Herzl, the one man on whom the eyes of all the Jewish world rest adoringly.

In a moment he began his presidential address, and when he referred to what was in the minds of all—the massacre at Kishinev—the whole Congress rose silently, listened, and as silently sat down, a protest so telling as to bring tears to many eyes.

* * *

The Congress sat for a week, assembling twelve times in all, morning and afternoon each day till the eve of the next Sabbath, when it adjourned until next year at the usual date. Amid many exciting and interesting features that differentiate this from any previous Congress, it contained

THREE GREAT SURPRISES.

These had to do with three countries of

Europe. (1) The first was an acknowledgment of *failure*, not final, no doubt, but certainly failure for the present, in coming to terms with Turkey.

“ Since the Fifth Congress,” said Dr. Herzl “ I have twice been honoured by a summons from his Majesty the Sultan to repair to Constantinople. On both occasions, however, in February and in August, 1902, the negotiations were without result. I could naturally accept nothing that was not in harmony with our Basle programme, and in particular scattered divided colonies in various parts of the Turkish Empire did not satisfy our national requirements.”

The speaker proceeded to show that this was not so great a difficulty as it seemed, because if the great European Powers favoured this scheme Turkey could soon be brought into line. The cogency of this argument received additional force later on.

(2) What about England, the friend of the Jews? Can she do anything to help?

After the failure of the negotiations with Turkey Dr. Herzl communicated with the British Cabinet, and laid before them a proposal that they should grant the Jewish people a concession of land in the Sinai Peninsula in order to found there a settlement for the refugees from other lands as a first step towards Palestine. The proposal was met in the most courteous and kindly way, but it was pointed out that the territory in question was in the jurisdiction of the Egyptian Government. The proceedings then adjourned to Egypt, with the strong recommendation of the English Cabinet to back it up. Lord Cromer and the Egyptian Minister of Foreign affairs were most kind, and acceded to the wish of England that a Commission of Experts should be sent to examine and report upon the practicability of the scheme. The Commission, consisting of eight able men, visited the tract of land, and during their absence the draft of a charter was drawn up between the Egyptian

Government and the Jewish Nation, granting the latter autonomous rule and municipal rights over the whole area. Meantime, a bad report of this new Promised Land was brought back by the spies—this time all were true and faithful men! The water supply was insufficient, and the plan had to be abandoned. But again

ENGLAND STEPPED IN TO HELP, and the English Government offered the Jews, by way of substitute, another territory. "The proposal consists of *an autonomous Jewish settlement in East Africa, with Jewish administration, Jewish local government, with a Jewish governor at its head, all, of course, under British suzerain control.*" When the president, amid the deepest silence, uttered these words, the Congress held its breath, but broke into cheers when he came back to the statement that this could be nothing but a step on the way, and that their only goal was Palestine. Then, reverting to England, he expressed their warmest thanks to that

country, and the great audience rose to their feet like one man and heartily responded to Mr. Zangwill's shout, "Three cheers for England." Dr. Herzl stated at once that this offer, if accepted by the Congress, could only be a temporary thing, an emergency measure for the present distress, a provisional form of colonization for scattered sections of the race. "But be it noted," he adds, "*on a national and self-governing basis.*"

RUSSIA'S CHANGE OF POLICY.

(3) The third surprise was indeed startling. Dr. Herzl went on to say that in the last few days a remarkable change in the situation had taken place. As a result of this singular man's magnetic personal influence with the Russian Ministers whom he had interviewed, and *partly, perhaps, through a desire to outbid England* and to prevent her from gaining too great an influence over the Jewish nation, this astounding announcement was made, first in conversation to Dr. Herzl, and afterwards in an official letter from M. de Plehve,

dated August 12, which was read to the Congress and entered in its report, that (1) Russia would place no obstacle in the way of Zionism and of a peaceful return of the Jews to their own land (!) ; (2) that it would co-operate in such an emigration when financial guarantees were forthcoming (! !) ; (3) lastly, that the Russian Government is prepared to support the Zionist efforts for the acquisition of Palestine by its influence with the Sultan (! ! !).

The significance of such a declaration, Dr. Herzl pointed out, would be apparent to everybody. Not only was an enormous obstacle removed, but a powerful ally had suddenly arisen.

It is impossible in the space of a brief article even to touch upon the incidents that followed the president's address, nor to do more than allude to the powerful papers and speeches of Dr. Nordau, Sir Francis Montefiore, Mr. Zangwill, and the debates during the twelve sessions of this memorable week.

They will be found at length in the *Jewish Chronicle* for August 28 and September 4.

The report of the Actions Committee shows that Zionism is increasing with great rapidity all over the world. Eighty new societies are announced from America, and every city in Canada possesses its branch. Roumania is still the head of the Zionist movement, with 100 societies, and in Germany the past year has seen an increase of threefold in its numbers, the movement there having its main support from the intellectual element.

The English offer occupied the chief place in the discussion, and on Wednesday a vote was taken upon the resolution that a committee of nine members be appointed to go to East Africa and make investigations on the spot. The resolution was carried by 295 for, to 177 against—majority, 118. The excitement was tremendous, and over one hundred Russian delegates left the Congress Hall as a protest. They returned afterwards,

however, and amicably continued their deliberations.

A lurid sidelight is thrown upon the Russian promises by a paragraph in the *Times* of August 28, in which a Russian correspondent of the *Times* announces that (at the same time when M. de Plehve was writing his plausible letter) the Russian Government had sent out a secret circular to all in authority *commanding them to hinder the progress of Zionism in every possible manner, to prohibit all their meetings, and to confiscate all their collected monies!*

* * *

Bland, truthful Russia! If the Zionists be wise they will fear you, even with your hands full of promises, and they will remember what their own prophet Ezekiel wrote (chap. xxxviii., especially verse 10) about your thoughts and actions to be fulfilled *at this very period*, or soon after this day.

* * *

Dr. Herzl's closing speech was a master-

piece, and united all differing minds once more in the closest bonds. As he ceased the pent-up excitement broke forth, "the leader stepped backward, but the whole Congress rushed forward, making accidentally one of those groups of rising bodies with a single man with a flag at the pinnacle which sculptors always use when describing a victory or triumph." The flag was waved dramatically, while "Herzl and Zion" and many other watch-cries rang through the hall. One delegate climbed upon the desk and poured forth a stream of Yiddish; another, from Palestine, snatching up the Zion flag which draped the tribune, wrapped himself in it, as in a *Tallith*, and spoke excitedly in Hebrew. For *two hours* this scene went on, until the whole Congress united in their favourite shout, "*Next year in Jerusalem.*"

Shall it be so? God only knows. We have seen "a nation born in a day," and that the Jews are nearing one of the great crises of their history, long foretold in Scripture, few, I think, will doubt.

CHAPTER VIII

“ THE MORN COMETH AND ALSO THE
NIGHT.”



IN a clever book published a few years ago there is an imaginary description of the feelings and experiences of a man who is supposed to have fallen asleep in Britain in its earliest days, and then awakened hundreds of years later to find it full of life, civilization and vigour, in the hands of another nation. Imagine such a person to have lapsed into sleep centuries ago in the city of Jerusalem, and this year to have recovered consciousness and looked around. What a marvellous change would greet his eyes ! The once sleepy old city awake and full of life, new hopes animating its inhabitants,

a new character displaying itself all around. This change has taken place, and the reason is not far to seek—it is because, according to God's promise, the ancient city is preparing for the return of the ancient people.

There is a remarkable prediction in one of the prophetic books about a time coming when Jerusalem should no longer be confined within walls—a time when its people should dwell outside the walls from the overflow of its population (Zech. ii. 4). *That time has come.* Only a few years ago all the inhabitants dwelt within, and the gates were shut at night. Now all this is changed, and with its numerous modern suburbs all round the walls Jerusalem is more like Brighton than the Jerusalem of old.

Not only is the population increasing, it is advancing by leaps and bounds. A few years ago there were only 7,000 Jews in Jerusalem—there are now nearer 70,000. The same holds good throughout the land, not perhaps in the same ratio, yet still in a

remarkable way the Jewish population is increasing in various centres. Moreover, if, as I have suggested elsewhere, the "Times of the Gentiles" came to an end on Good Friday, 1898, a date well known to students, we should be able to see some sign in or about the city to enable us to recognize that Jerusalem is no longer "trodden under foot of the Gentiles." What then do we see? The Jew now asserts himself. Two weekly newspapers in the Hebrew language are now published in Jerusalem! Moreover, instead of being ground down and often suffering cruel wrong without redress, as has been their lot for many centuries, Jews have recently been permitted to hold magistracies in Jerusalem, and the Jewish Rabbi in that city as a member of the Town Council is admitted to a legal share in the city government! This is to me a pretty clear proof that the prophetic period to which our Lord gave the name of the "Times of the Gentiles" is now at an end.

84 THE BRIGHTENING EAST

Here too I would call attention to *a striking change* in the Jewish character. How seldom one meets a Jew who is a farmer ! They are money-lenders, shopkeepers, artisans ; they frequent the learned professions, but agriculture seems out of their line of life. Yet it was not so of old, and in their own land they now see the need of returning to their ancient occupation. In the Scriptures we read continually of plowing and sowing and reaping, of vineyards and oliveyards ; but up to a recent date very few of these latter were in the hands of Jews, and agriculture was at a low ebb indeed. When we read in the Bible frequent references to large populations inhabiting the Holy Land we see plainly that to give occupation to and to feed such numbers, husbandry must have been in a very different condition then from what it is now.

A close inspection reveals this unmistakably. The officers of the Palestine Exploration Fund, who did such valuable work a few years ago in surveying the Holy Land,

found signs of ancient vineyards terraced up to the tops of the hills, and remains of rock cisterns in all directions—sure evidence of a dense population in former days, which subsisted on the output of the ground. This exactly corresponds with the familiar and oft-repeated words of Moses in his description of the Land of Promise. How different from the state of Palestine while in the hands of the Turkish oppressor in the days since then !

Now however a change is apparent ; the Jew realizes that if he is to hold the land and make a living out of it he must once more become a farmer ; consequently he is seriously turning his attention to agriculture ; little colonies are being established over the land, and men are being trained in the cultivation of the vine and olive and various crops, while industries, such as the Soap Factory near Jerusalem, and the orange trade at Jaffa, are signs of *the country as well as the city preparing for its coming population.*

To return for a moment to Jerusalem.

86 THE BRIGHTENING EAST

Two years ago the daily journals gave an account of the official opening of a new water supply in that city. Hitherto the inhabitants have had to depend upon tanks and cisterns for rainwater ; the supply has been scanty and bad, and disease has been rife. This has not always been the case of course.

Solomon, who did everything magnificently, built two splendid aqueducts by which an ample supply of water was brought into Jerusalem ; one of these became ruined and useless centuries ago, but the other has up to the present day been still bringing a small supply from Solomon's Pools as far as Bethlehem. Now a large pipe has been laid from that place, down one hill, across the valley, and up another hill, a distance of about five miles, into Jerusalem itself, thus giving a vastly improved supply of water for the city. No doubt it will not be sufficient for future needs, but it is a great step in advance, and marks an epoch in the awakening of the ancient city to the new life. How remarkable

the connection of ideas suggested by this incident !

From the very place where He was born Who called Himself the Water of Life, this stream of "living waters" now flows into His city ! It is singular too to notice that this water is delivered within the ancient Temple enclosure, where the Lord once said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink !"

We have been gazing with delight upon the brightness which already begins to break upon the Jewish nation ; whether our thoughts turn towards the Zionist movement or to the change that is passing over the Holy Land and the Holy City, we rejoice because all seems full of promise ; but—*something must happen before the consummation* ; something that will delay though it cannot finally hinder the ultimate grandness and glory of the promises.

I wrote in a previous chapter about the persecution of the Jews in Russia ; one of its

forms is the taking away of Jewish boys by force from their homes, and training them for the Army. There are now 126,000 Jews in the Russian army; none of these are allowed to rise beyond the rank of non-commissioned officers, but the Russians admit that their finest non-commissioned officers are Jews. I believe that God has a purpose in this, and that a time is coming when these very soldiers, trained by Russia herself, will draw the sword against their persecutor in defence of their own land! In the future, and it may be in the near future, *a great struggle* is to centre round Jerusalem. In the will of Peter the Great—a remarkable document—two duties were bequeathed to the Russian nation: (1) to take Constantinople, and (2) to seize India. Russia has never lost sight of these two objects, and ever since, quietly and steadily like the rising tide, never going back, never giving up, she has moved with dogged determination in both directions. When I was a child I

recollect a large map on the wall on which my father used to mark with pins the steady advance of Russian territory. I remember when Circassia, the sturdy highland foe, was at long last overwhelmed in the advance southward ; and I shall never forget the day when he called us to the map and said, " See ! the Caspian is now only a Russian lake." Few people cared about the matter then, or believed the warnings of the far-seeing ones ; *every one knows it now*. Napoleon used to say that he saw clearly the coming struggle was to be between Russia and England.

Napoleon knew nothing of Ezekiel's prophecies, but we can find in them the plainest predictions of a great contest to take place in the latter days in Palestine between " the king of the North " and " the king of the South."

That the former of these titles describes Russia there is no doubt. He is called by Ezekiel the Prince of Rosh, and chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, names not difficult

to recognize in their present form. Very often in the prophecies there is a promise of deliverance "from the north country," and we know that the Czar holds in his dominions five millions of Jews, a larger number than are to be found in any other land.

In December, 1901, I read an "inspired" article from a Russian journal that appeared in our daily papers. The writer said that the time had now come for bringing the ships of war so long shut up in the Black Sea down through the Straits to Constantinople.

In the month of August of this year these ships came down on a flimsy diplomatic pretext! Doubtless it was a trial trip. The same paper goes on to say, "We are now nearing the time when we can strike a blow at India; we have got our railway line to within 100 miles of the frontier; it will not take long to run the rest. We have 28 ships of war in Eastern waters."¹

¹ The daily papers of October 12 of this year recorded the fact that the number of Russian war-ships in that locality had gone up to 90!

It was for this reason that Russia seized Port Arthur, to have a port without ice in that region for the fleet that is to move upon India. The blow will be struck in more places than one, but the part of the struggle with which we now are concerned is that which will take place in Palestine.

WHO IS THE KING OF THE SOUTH ?

In the past it was not easy to explain this expression, but now there is little difficulty. Looking at the opposing forces from the standpoint of the prophet, i.e., from Palestine, the King of the South is the sovereign who virtually possesses Egypt ; who can bring up his troops by the Red Sea or the Persian Gulf ; who has great colonies in Africa, East, South and West, possessing also that vast tract of land called the Protectorate of Uganda ; who will by that time have the railway running through his dominion from South to North. Is not that a good claim to the title " the King of the South " ?

But further, in Ezekiel xxxviii. 13, there is,

I believe, a distinct prophecy of England under the expression "the merchants of Tarshish." The prophet adds that these "merchants," "with all the young lions thereof," shall cry out against the intruder from the North and shall ask what right has he to invade the ancient kingdom of the Holy Land?

Five and twenty years ago the late Canon Hoare said to me that he had no doubt "the young lions" meant England's Colonies, the young mighty nations of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Tasmania. He had little conception then of what those Colonies would in a few years do for their Mother Country! In the recent South African war did not our Colonies come out as "young lions" showing their determination to stand by the Old Country? *They will do this once more in a fiercer fight.* In the height of that coming struggle into which the nations of Europe will be drawn, some on England's side, some against her, just when things are at their worst, as the King of the North

gains a temporary advantage and Jerusalem is captured amid dreadful scenes, just at the very climax,—

THE DELIVERER WILL APPEAR !

He will overwhelm His (because His ancient people's) enemies, and then shall begin the long foretold

REIGN OF PEACE.

I refer you to Ezekiel xxxiv. onwards, and to Zechariah xii., xiv., for your own study of the subject. But all this, recollect, is the Second Phase of the Advent ; Christ will have come for His Church *before these events take place*.

Once more, therefore, I say, if we see things that belong to the second stage shaping already for their accomplishment, how near must be the First Phase of His appearing ! Those who love Him will look up with joy and thankfulness and say, “ Yes, thank God, He must be very near.” But they will also very humbly say,

“ May we be ready for Him at His Coming ! ”

AMEN.

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